RESOLUTION RE. STEPS TO START DEMOCRATIC PROCESS AND BRING AN END TO PRESENT SITUATION IN PUNJAB

SARDAR JAGJIT SINGH AURORA (Punjab): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I beg to move the following Resolution:—

> "Having regard to the fact that the situation in Punjab is continuously deteriorating and there is an urgent need to bring about normalcy there, this House is of opinion that it is imperative to effect basic changes in the present policy and priorities in relation thereto and, accordingly, recommends to Government to hold wide ranging discussions with all political parties at the national level with a view to evolving a meaningful plan to start democratic process in the State and to bring to an end the present situation."

Sir, at the outset I would like to mention that this Resolution is somewhat at variance with the Resolution that I had personally suggested. . .*(Interruptions)*... Sir. I have said that the House expresses its concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in Punjab in the two years of the President's rule; to bring about normalcy there is a need to carry out basic changes in the present policy and practices; this House recommends that wide-ranging discussions should be held at the national level with all political parties to evolve a meaningful plan to start democratic processes in the State and end the preseat Police raj. Sir, I shall not quibble about the change and I accept the resolution read first Now I wish to make a few introductory remarks.

The ever-increasing violence and turmoil in Punjab since 1982 has cieated a sense of concern and foreboding in the entire country. The geo-political importance of this State greatly adds to this concern. I feel that the concept of Khalistan has been bandied about so extensively in the press and the electronic media that it has made it virtually impossible to analyze this problem rationally and objectively. And our none-too-friendly relations with Pakistan and Pakistan's active, covert support to the terrorists has further clouded our perceptions.

I suggest, we may consider this problem under the following terms. First, whether the fear about the threat to the integrity of the country is well-founded. Next, did the demand for Khalistan ever have the support of the majority of the Sikhs in India or is it just the creation of a few romantic and fundamentalist or unscrupulous leaders? Has the Government handled this vital issue with a sense of responsible sensitivity and objective competence or subordinated it to subserve the partisan political ends ? Lastly, can and how should this seemingly intractable situation be resolved now?

Rightly or wrongly the Sikhs feel that both Mahatma Gandhi and [Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had promised them a special status in the Punjab, which the Government did not honour. They had to agitate for it time and again and till today they have not had a fair deal. This really is the bedrock of the problem.

Since independence there is a long history of confrontation between the Akali Party and the Central Government i.e. the Congress party for political power in the Punjab. Whenever the Akali Party came into power, which was normally with the